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Committee on Relations with the Host Country

Letter dated 25 February 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country

I have the honour to address you in your capacity as Chairman of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country, with regard to the attached note verbale, dated today, from the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the United States Mission to the United Nations (see annex).

I further have the honour to request that you distribute the present letter and its annex as a document of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country.

(*Signed*) Rodrigo **Malmierca Díaz**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 25 February 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country

The Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations presents its compliments to the United States Mission to the United Nations and has the honour to refer to the first session of the Group of Governmental Experts constituted by the Secretary-General under General Assembly resolution 61/89, with the mandate to review the viability, scope and parameters of a draft comprehensive and legally binding instrument establishing common international rules for the import, export and transfer of conventional weapons, held from 11 to 15 February 2008, at the Headquarters of the United Nations in New York.

The Secretary-General invited Cuba to nominate an expert to participate in the Group, and the Cuban authorities decided to appoint José Rufino Menendez Hernandez, Director of the Center for Disarmament and International Security Studies of Cuba.

In order for the Cuban expert to be able to participate in the first working session of the Group, his visa application was submitted to the United States Interest Section in Havana on 11 January 2008, through note verbale No. 046 dated 9 January 2008.

However, Mr. Menendez Hernandez could not travel to New York to participate in the meeting due to the fact that his visa application had remained unaddressed by the host country authorities until after the conclusion of the aforementioned Group of Experts meeting. The telephone communication of the United Nations Interest Section in Havana was received on Thursday, 21 February 2008, six days after the meeting had finished.

Such delay is unjustifiable, for the procedures for the visa application were carried out in accordance with the procedures established by the host country authorities.

The Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations wishes to express its protest over the late issuing of Mr. Menendez Hernandez's visa, and once again calls on the host country authorities to honour their international obligations as hosts of the United Nations, specifically those related to the timely issuing of entry visas for the representatives of Member States to attend United Nations meetings, under section 11, article IV, of the Agreement between the United Nations and the United States of America regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations, and resolution 62/72 of the General Assembly.

The Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations hopes that in the future similar situations will not be repeated, for they affect the effective exercise by Cuba of its legitimate rights as a State Member of the United Nations.